

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00105 081504Z

43

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SUBJECT: CLICHE COMMISSION REPORT RELEASED MAY 6

REF: QUEBEC A-13, A-9 AND PREVIOUS.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY:

AS EXPECTED, CLICHE COMMISSION HAS RETURNED A TOUGH REPORT ON VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION IN QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND CALLED FOR COMPLETE REFORM OF INDUSTRY'S LABOR RELATIONS. 134 RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMISSION INCLUDE CREATION OF INDEPENDENT AGENCY TO GOVERN QUEBEC S CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND IMMEDIATE GOQ TRUSTEESHIPS OVER FOUR CONSTRUCTION UNIONS COMMISSION BLAMES IN PART GOQ UNWILLINGNESS TO ENFORCE LAW FOR THE VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION. BOURASSA HAS PROMISED TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION THIS WEEK TO BEGIN CORRECTIVE PROCESS. EDITORIAL REACTION PRAISES REPORT AND EXPRESSES HOPE GOQ WILL IMPLEMENT IT. EFFECTIVENESS AND TIMELINESS OF BOURASSA'S IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL SET POLITICAL TONE IN QUEBEC FOR REST OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION. END SUMMARY.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00105 081504Z

WM IN A 603-PAGE DOCUMENT PRESENTED PREMIER BOURASSA MAY 2

AND RELEASED BY GOVERNMENT MAY 6, THE CLICHE COMMISSION CALLS FOR COMPLETE REFORM OF LABOR RELATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. AFTER DESCRIBING AT GREAT LENGTH THE INDUSTRY S PROBLEMS, COMMISSION RECOMMENDS POWERFUL NEW AGENCY BE CREATED TO GOVERN, WITHOUT POLITICAL INTERFERENCE, QUEBEC S 4 BILLION CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. IT FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT NEW AGENCY BE HEADED BY A PROVINCIAL COURT JUDGE AND REPLACE THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY COMMISSION WHICH CURRENTLY ADMINISTERS CONSTRUCTION LAWS AND STANDS JUDGED AS NEST OF NEPOTISM AND FAVORITISM. SUCH AN AGENCY SHOULD BE INDEPENDENT OF GOVERNMENT FINANCING AND ADMINISTRATION AND SHOULD ESTABLISH ITS OWN NORMS UNLIKE OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BODIES.

3. OTHER IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS AS OUTLINED IN THE GAZETTE AND LE SOLEIL ARE: - THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD IMMEDIATELY IMPOSE TRUSTEESHIP ON FOUR INTERNATIONAL CONSTRUCTION UNIONS AFFILIATED WITH THE QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CLEAN UP UNDESIRABLE ELEMENTS AND PRACTICES WITHIN THE UNIONS.

- UNIONS SHOULD BE INCORPORATED UNDER QUEBEC S PROFESSIONAL SYNDICATES ACT AND BE REQUIRED TO PRODUCE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.

- UNION MEMBERS SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE BY SECRET BALLOT ON ALL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AGENCY.

- ALL PERSONS WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS SHOULD BE BARRED FROM HOLDING UNION OFFICE.

- QUEBEC S SIX EMPLOYER ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTING CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS SHOULD BE GROUPED INTO A SINGLE QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION.

- COMPANY OFFICIALS WHO OFFER BRIBES AND UNION REPRESENTATIVES ACCEPTING THEM SHOULD BE PUNISHED OR FINED UNDER THE PENAL CODE.

- ABOLITION OF ALL UNION HIRING HALLS AND EMPLOYER AGENCIES, WITH JOB PLACEMENT IN THE INDUSTRY FALLING UNDER THE EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AGENCY.

- GRADUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF A GUARANTEED INCOME PLAN

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PAGE 03 QUEBEC 00105 081504Z

FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS PARTLY BY OFFERING JOBS FIRST TO EMPLOYEES WITH MORE THAN 500 HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT IN A YEAR.

- UNIONS SHOULD BE OBLIGED TO GIVE THEIR MEMBERS A FULL ACCOUNT OF HOW UNION FUNDS ARE USED.

- THE ANNUAL RAIDING PERIOD BETWEEN SEPT. 1 AND SEPT. 30 SHOULD BE ABOLISHED AND REPLACED BY A RECRUITMENT PERIOD WHERE THE EMPHASIS WOULD BE ON UNION

INFORMATION, NOT COERCION.

4. AFTER SIX MONTHS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS WHICH EXPOSED STEADY UNDERCURRENT CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION, THE COMMISSION SINGLED OUT FOR BLAME PAUL DESROCHERS, ANDRE DESJARDINS, AND LABOR MINISTER COURNOYER. DESROCHERS, FORMER TOP AID OF BOURASSA, ACCUSED OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN SEVERAL BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS. DESJARDINS, FORMER PRESIDENT OF QUEBEC FEDERATION OF LABOR S PROVINCIAL BUILDING TRADES COUNCIL, DISCREDITED SO BADLY THAT COMMISSION RECOMMENDED HE BE PREVENTED FROM MAKING A UNION COMEBACK OPEN QUOTES IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST . CLOSE QUOTES COMMISSION STATED GOQ UNWILLINGNESS ENFORCE LAW AT LEAST PARTLY TO BLAME FOR VIOLENCE AND CORRUPTION. IT BLAMED COURNOYER IN PARTICULAR FOR BEING POWERLESS. REPORT CALLS FOR OPEN QUOTE STRONG PERSONS CLOSE QUOTES TO RESTORE ORDER BUT DOES NOT URGE COURNOYER S RESIGNATION, PREFERRING LEAVE THAT TO POLITICAL PROCESS.

5 . INITIAL REACTION HAD BEEN PRIMED IN SHORT RANGE BY WEEKEND LEAKS AND IN LONG RANGE BY WHOLE IMPACT OF SIX MONTHS OF HEARINGS. AS PREVIEWED IN HIS MARCH THRONE SPEECH,

BOURASSA PROMISED IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ENACT RECOMMENDATIONS. LEGISLATION WILL BE PROPOSED THIS WEEK TO PLACE CERTAIN UNIONS UNDER GOVERNMENT TRUSTEESHIP, CONTROL POWER OF UNION STEWARDS AND BAN THOSE WITH CRIMINAL RECORDS FROM LABOR POSITIONS. EVEN WHILE ACTING, BOURASSA ATTEMPTED SIDESTEP REPORT S CRITICISM OF HIS GOVERNMENT S ROLE AND CHALLENGED PQ TO FIND ANYTHING THAT CASTS DOUBT ON INTEGRITY MEMBERS OF ACTUAL GOVERNMENT. ALL OPPOSITION DEPUTIES CONCENTRATED MUCH OF THEIR FIRE ON COURNOYER INSISTING UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 QUEBEC 00105 081504Z

THAT THE REPORT CALLED FOR HIS IMMEDIATE RESIGNATION. THIS LED TO EXCHANGE WITH BOURASSA ON WHO KNEW HOW TO READ AND WHO DID NOT. COURNOYER SKIPPED THIS MEETING OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUT DETAILS ON LAW PROPOSALS (SIMILAR TO THOSE REPORTED QUEBEC A-8) WERE ANNOUNCED IN HIS NAME.

6. EDITORIAL OPINION UNIVERSALLY PRAISED CLICHE COMMISSION S WORK AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GOQ WOULD IMPLEMENT IT. LE JOUR WRITES THAT ONE CAN REPROCHE THE COMMISSION FOR STUDYING SOME QUESTIONS IN HASTE BUT THINKS THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF CLICHE RECOMMENDATIONS COULD BRING PEACE TO CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. BUT IT DOUBTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL HARM ITS OWN INTERESTS BY IMPLEMENTING IT. LE JOUR ALSO EXPECTS STRONG REACTION FROM AMERICAN UNIONS

AS THE CLICHE COMMISSION HAS DECLARED WAR ON QUEBEC
LOCALS AFFILIATED WITH AND SUBSERVIENT TO US UNIONS.

LE SOLEIL APPLAUDS CLICHE REPORT AS HONEST EFFORT
TRANSFORM IN DEPTH SYSTEM WHICH HAS CREATED JUNGLE IN
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. IT APPROVES OF RECOMMENDATIONS
CHANGE SHOP STEWARD SYSTEM, END UNION RIVALRIES AND
POWER OF QFL OVER OTHER UNIONS. THE GAZETTE CALLS REPORT
A DEVASTATING DOCUMENT AND HOPES GOVERNMENT WILL NOW HAVE
COURAGE TO IMPLEMENT IT, REPLACING ITS SPINELESSNESS OF
RECENT YEARS. LE DEVOIR CALLS THE REPORT A WORK OF
REMARKABLE DILIGENCE. THE PAPER ADDS THAT WHILE NO GOQ
MINISTER DIRECTLY IMPLICATED, GOQ SHOULD ACCEPT REPORT
WITH HUMILITY RATHER THAN PUBLICLY PROCLAIMING ITS
VIRTUE. LE JOURNAL DE QUEBEC STATES THAT ONCE CURRENT
POLITICAL EXCITEMENT HAS PASSED, LOGIC WILL WIN OVER
SENTIMENT AND COURNOYER WILL HAVE TO RESIGN TO INSURE
THE FUTURE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REFORMS
IT WILL PROPOSE IN LABOR RELATIONS.

7. COMMENT: PROVERBIAL BALL NOW CLEARLY IN BOURASSA S
COURT. HE HAS BEEN HINTING AT TOUGH LABOR POLICY FOR
SOME TIME AND HE NOW HAS AMMUNITION TO CARRY IT OUT AND
BEGIN TO REDEEM AT SAME TIME WHAT SOME HAVE SEEN AS GOQ
LOSS OF MORAL CREDIBILITY. ONE CAN EXPECT OPPOSITION
WILL ATTEMPT TO MAXIMIZE REPORTS, POLITICAL IMPACT ONCE
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 QUEBEC 00105 081504Z

THEY HAVE DIGESTED IT. EFFECTIVENESS OF BOURASSA S
IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS WILL SET
POLITICAL TONE IN PROVINCE FOR REST OF THE ASSEMBLY
SESSION, IF NOT MUCH LONGER.

8. LABOR UNION REACTION NOT YET KNOWN. IT WILL PROBABLY
CONTAIN A MIX OF CHARGES THAT CLICHE COMMISSION WAS
ANTI-LABOR, A FEELING THAT LABOR COULD CLEAN ITS OWN
HOUSE MORE EFFECTIVELY, AND A LEGITIMATE FEAR THAT
GENUINE UNION RIGHTS COULD BE COMPROMISED IF REFORMS NOT
CARRIED OUT IN POSITIVE SPIRIT.

9. SOME CLICHE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS, IF ACCEPTED,
COULD WEAKEN POWERS OF AMERICAN UNIONS OVER THEIR
QUEBEC AFFILIATES. THE RECOMMENDATION TO INCORPORATE
TRADE UNIONS UNDER QUEBEC PROFESSIONAL SYNDICATE ACT
COULD ALLOW GOQ TO EXAMINE FINANCIAL STATUS OF UNIONS
AND THUS BRING TO QUEBEC CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS
NOW HELD BY INTERNATIONALS. SOME OF COMMISSION S 134
RECOMMENDATION DEALT WITH RIGHTS OF MEMBERS AND UNION
PROCEDURES WRITTEN INTO CONSTITUTIONS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL UNIONS. FOR INSTANCE, ACCORDING TO LE

SOLEIL, UNION WORK REGULATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN A SUBJECT
OF COURT ACTIONS BY INDIVIDUAL WORKERS AND THAT MIGHT
HAPPEN NOW. IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY TO TELL HOW MUCH
POST-CLICHE POLITICAL/LABOR INTERPLAY WILL CHALLENGE
TRADITIONAL AND LEGITIMATE LABOR UNION PEROGATIVES.

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